

Andrew Jackson to John Hutchings, April 7, 1805, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO JOHN HUTCHINGS.

Hermitage, April 7, 1805

Sir , By last mail I wrote you inclosing Doctor Rawlings draft on Major Bradford, which was found in the Desk, some time after you left us which I hope has reached you in due time to present to the Major for payment.

On the third instant, the race between Truxton and ploughboy was run, in the presence of the largest concourse of people I ever saw assembled, unless in an army.¹ Truxton had on Tuesday evening before got a serious hurt in his thigh, which occassioned it to swell verry much, and had it not have been for myself, would have occasioned, the forfeight to have been paid—but this I was determined not to permit. The appearance of Truxton induced his friends not to bet. This was unfortunate, or carthage would have been destroyed. All things prepared, the horses started, and Truxton under every disadvantage beat him with as much ease as the *Queen* beat *Whistlejackett* . But when he came out the last heat, he was lame, in his hind leg and one of his four legs. Upon his well leg the plate had sprung and lay across the frog. under all these dificulties he could have distanced the ploughboy Either heat, he beat the last heat under a hard bearing rain, without whip or spur sixty yards, and run it in 3 m. 59. seconds. by two watches, by another in 3 m 59½, by Blufords pendulum in 4 m. 1 second, by one other in 3 m. 57 seconds. There was about 10,000 dollars won and if it had not been for the accident there would have been at lea[s]t 20,000. Thus ends the fate of ploughboy. Major W. T. Lewis lost considerably—at least 2000\$.²

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1 Another race was arranged between these horses for “the fourth thursday” in November, 1805, as is shown by a memorandum of a bet between William T. Lewis, betting on Truxton, and William Lytle, betting on Ploughboy. The amount of the bet was \$275. Ploughboy was owned by Capt. Joseph Irvin. It was this second race that led to the duel with Dickinson.

2 Racing was a common sport of the English county families in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The settlers in the South naturally reproduced the custom. “Race paths” were laid out in the earliest settlements and succeeded by circular tracks, as the settlements developed. In the Donelson neighborhood, near the junction of Stone River with the Cumberland, is a beautiful meadow, oval in shape, known originally as Buchanan's Old Fields, but later on as Clover Bottom. It was here that Mrs. Jackson's father settled when he arrived on the Cumberland in 1784. The road from Nashville skirts its western side and crosses Stone River, which flows along its northern and eastern side. On the south is a gentle acclivity from which the whole meadow has an excellent view. This place was leased, in Nov. 21, 1804, by William Preston Anderson, with the privilege of buying 300 acres on the south for \$3000. Mar. 15, 1805, he sold two-thirds of his rights in the enterprise to Andrew Jackson and John Hutchings, and Apr. 8, 1806, he sold the remaining third to John Coffee. Jackson, Hutchings, and Coffee formed a partnership and opened a store, a tavern, stables, and booths for hucksters. See statement of Mrs. Elizabeth Craighead about Jackson's marriage, Dec. 2, 1826. Cf. also deeds in Tenn. Hist. Soc., Coffee MSS.

There was a Clover Bottom Jockey Club. Its president, Edward Ward, gave notice in the *Impartial Review*, Apr. 25, 1807, that the Clover Bottom Jockey Club races would begin on the first Thursday in the following May. The first day would be given to four-mile heats, the second to two-mile heats, “free for any horse, mare, or gelding, agreeable to the rules of said club”. As to the race finally run, between Truxton and Ploughboy, see the foot-note at the end of Charles Dickinson's card of May 21, 1806, *post*.

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We have had no rain yet, it is now cloudy and cold the river verry low, and³ this day we mean to try to start our cotton Boat, but I am almost certain she cannot pass. Mr Roberts has not yet returned from the Elinois, therefore can give no directions as to the appropriation of the monies arising from the sales of the property gone to markt, more than what I have heretofore given untill I hear from him. Capt Crawly has not got off yet, and Stones River has not eighteen inches water—therefore no hope of our Boats up that river getting out. As soon as you can arrange your business at Neworleans it will be well for you to return. It is verry uncertain when the waters will permit the boats to descend the river. We have wrote on to you on the subject of laying in our supply of goods at Neworleans, from Meeker, Williamson and Patton, we have been advised, that they can furnish us, the memorandum inclosed to you heretofore will aid you in the situation. I have only to say that if any is laid in, we must have a supply of Blanketts.

³ Probably a slave who had run away.

I have no doubt but you will push forward the Keel Boat as soon as possible. On the day of the race we Took in one hundred pounds cash on the field, and lost a great deal for the want of attendance. This will shew what could be made at that stand with a good supply and attention.

Wishing you a speedy and safe return I am Dr Jack, your sincere friend

P. S. Be sure to make strict enquiry for George,³ should he be gone to sea. By applying at the custom house office you can see the registration of the seamen. your friends will go with you who can make the necessary enquiry.